



PARLIAMENT OF BOTSWANA

STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE P.T.C. SKELEMANI, MP

AT THE 144TH IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

20TH – 24TH MARCH 2022

BALI, INDONESIA

**'Getting to zero: Mobilising parliaments to act on climate
change'**

The Honourable President of the IPU, MR PACHECO
The Honourable President of the 144th IPU Assembly
Honourable Speakers from National Parliaments,
Honourable Leaders of Delegations
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
I extend my warmest regards and greetings to all of you

1. It is indeed an honour and privilege to join you on the occasion of the 144th Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly and related meetings in the beautiful resort town of Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia.
2. Mr President I also take this moment to extend our sincere regards and commiserations as Botswana to those we have lost owing to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the global strife we continue to experience.
3. Mr President, the subject of Climate Change is one we should talk about because of the existentialist threat it poses to life on earth as we know it.
4. That we have chosen the general debate to focus on Climate Change, clearly demonstrates the seriousness with which we seek to treat this issue as Parliaments.
5. Ladies and Gentlemen, Botswana is not exempt from the impacts of climate change. The key economic sectors dependent on the climate system such as agriculture, water, energy and tourism have been adversely affected, resulting in declined livelihoods of our citizens.

This has especially been true for those in rural areas, as most of rural communities derive their livelihoods from natural resources beneficiation and small scale rain-fed agriculture.

6. In that regard, climate change represents one of the greatest environmental, social and economic threats facing Botswana today.
7. Climate change is projected to increase the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as heat waves, droughts, and floods. For countries like Botswana, this could have dire consequences on livelihoods, with potential to further exacerbate conditions of the poor and vulnerable.
8. Climate change impacts also has the potential to further amplify existing inequalities among our people, more especially gender inequalities.
9. As Parliaments, we now urgently need to ensure that our countries have put in place policies and action plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to significantly reduce climate change risks and impacts.
10. Madam President, Parliament of Botswana adopted the Climate Change Policy and Institutional Framework in 2021, in an effort to respond to existing and potential climate change effects. The policy presents an opportunity for the country to reiterate its commitment in the stabilisation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere to the required levels as demonstrated by science.

11. A national Action Plan and Strategy to operationalise the Policy has also been developed. This framework involves the development of a long term low carbon strategy, a national adaptation plan, nationally appropriate mitigation actions, identification of technologies, plan for knowledge management capacity development, education and public awareness and a financial mechanism.
12. Madam President, these commitments are further anchored on our development policies through the Vision 2036 and National Development Plans which strive for a society that is sustainable, climate resilient and whose development follows a low carbon development path in pursuit of prosperity for all.
13. The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) is one of the long term strategies passed by Parliament towards reinforcing the reduction of climate change effects in the second NDCs. Under the NAP, relevant Ministries, the National Climate Change Unit, relevant Parliamentary Committees, District Climate Change Committees, the Private Sector, Non-governmental Organizations, Village Development Committees (VDC) and Development Partners, are among the institutional arrangements put in place to ensure the success of the NAP.
14. As part of our commitment to the Paris Agreement, Botswana has also communicated its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), of which it intended to achieve an overall emissions reduction of 15% by 2030. We are currently preparing our second report for

submission to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

15. Madam President, our role as Botswana Parliament therefore, is to strengthen governance and policy, and enhance implementation towards transformative climate-resilient development. Botswana Parliament provides an oversight role for realisation of policy response measures.
16. In that regard we have established a Portfolio Committee on Wildlife, Natural Resources and Climate Change and a Special Select Committee on SDGs. These Committees play a leading role of promoting establishment of an enabling environment that facilitates the implementation of climate related policies, initiatives and sustainable development.
17. Ladies and gentlemen, I must also however note that additional capacities are needed within Parliament which include, dedicated, resourced and capacitated portfolio committees as well as their increased involvement in the climate change negotiation platforms. One of our key developments in that regard, has been the establishment of the Parliamentary Caucus on Women, which continues to provide a gender lens into our developmental agenda including climate change mitigation.
18. Madam President, my hope is that the recently concluded 26th Conference of Parties (COP 26) and the agreed road map, are put into action immediately. For example, the Green finance for the net

zero economy where \$130 trillion of private money was pledged to expedite the transition to a net-zero economy, needs to be translated into a reality.

19. Similarly, the newly established International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB), which aims to provide a worldwide baseline for climate and other environmental, social, and governance (ESG) disclosure standards, will be a critical step in improving climate-smart investing decision-making.
20. Madam President, what is now left for us as Parliaments, is to ensure, in line with the COP 26 resolutions, an increase in the pace of implementing the Paris Agreement through the passing of appropriate legislation.
21. Such legislation must be specific and targeted to not only ensure reduction in emissions but to also ensure that our governments maintain their aim to meet the Paris Agreement's temperature objective at a faster rate in order to combat climate change.
22. There is also a need to intensify our actions and investments which are needed for a sustainable low carbon future and equitable developments globally.
23. Madam President, we do not seek to experience once again, what developing countries endured during the COVID-19 Pandemic, when many of our people nearly perished owing to unequitable access and distribution of vaccines.

24. What we now need to see as Parliaments is increased parliamentary participation on negotiations at regional and international fora where the needs of the most vulnerable are the subject of discussions.
25. We need to foster increased public debate to influence special structures for the vulnerable, as well as equitable resource allocation, mobilisation and special dispensation for especially women and the vulnerable through such intervention as youth grants, young farmers fund, gender support fund, climate financing, etc.
26. There is also a need for more advocacy on climate change and its mainstreaming into national development planning and policies for the neediest demographic groups, so that no one is left behind.
27. For Botswana and indeed other developing nations, we do not need some of the barriers and challenges that may hinder effective climate action, where climate change is used as a trade issue by restricting markets access for goods that are carbon intensive in their production. The Paris Agreement recognises the need for each country to attain its developmental needs by harnessing its resources.
28. Botswana's economy is primarily anchored on mining and agriculture. The diamond and beef sectors in particular, mean a lot to Botswana and are also the most energy and water intensive. We therefore require better production technologies, funding, water and

energy efficient and climate friendly production in order to meet our development agenda.

29. In terms of energy, we also have valuable coal resources which remain widely unexplored but hold potential for economic development. It is within the climate change financing mechanisms that we look to, in order to access technology transfer and development of sustainable green energy sources to meet our economic needs.
30. Our Climate Change Policy therefore presents an opportunity for the country to reiterate its commitment to the international community in the stabilisation of greenhouse gases, while also driving our developmental needs as a country.
31. Madam President, we need to acknowledge the impact of COVID-19 on our development agendas globally. As we move towards recovery and building back better, Parliaments can guide public policy particularly on climate change as it cuts across disciplines and is implemented using various sectorial policies. Recovery plans therefore need to amongst others, identify those strategies that can easily be aligned to the green transition.
32. There is need therefore, to mobilise all stakeholders (across vertical and horizontal tiers) to change values, attitudes and behaviors for achievement of sustainable development.
33. Madam President, in conclusion, I take this opportunity to call on Parliaments to ensure they remain valuable partners at the forefront,

to achieving sustainable development for all, because of the Constitutional advantages they enjoy, through law making, overseeing government policies and programmes, enacting and scrutinising government budget and representing the views of their constituents.

34. As parliaments we have the responsibility to shape national climate policies, drive equitable and sustainable development and fill the important gaps at global, national and local levels. It remains crucial that parliamentarians are capacitated on issues of climate change to catalyse the process.
35. I thank you for your kind attention.